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Breaking Images, Widening Perceptions Reflections on Horacio Quiroga in Translation

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Abstract

Horacio Quiroga (1878-1937) is one of the most accomplished and critically acclaimed short story writers in the Spanish-speaking world, and his works have attained canonical status in the South American literary tradition. Some of his most renowned stories circulate for a global audience, published in various collections and anthologies made possible by their translation into English. The most widely available English version was translated by Margaret Sayers Peden (1976/2004); Quiroga speaks through her translation choices. However, one must ask the question: is this the Horacio Quiroga previous generations have known, appreciated and praised? Have his exquisite prose and photographic narrative skill managed to live on for readers in English? This article aims to address core issues in literary translation as they pertain to Quiroga and Sayers Peden's texts. It also discusses domestication strategies, how manipulation of the original may hinder readability, the importance of getting socio-political and geographic features right, and the professional responsibility implicit in the translator's role as cultural mediator when selecting, editing and publishing non-mainstream literature.

Translation is undoubtedly the most privileged medium through which many authors writing in languages other than English are able to gain recognition in a predominantly Anglophone publishing and academic environment. However, cases exist in which crosscultural misunderstandings result from the works offered to the wider public. These may go largely undetected even by experienced literary translators and scholars. This paper analyses the ways in which cultures "talk past each other" by offering an example of how certain translation choices made at one time – and reprinted almost three decades later without further comment or revision – can actually affect, over time, both the reception of literature from peripheral countries as well as peripheral literary cultures themselves, rewriting through this process the very traits that make an author and his production belong to a certain place, time and community.

This article examines English translations of a selection of short stories by renowned Uruguayan author Horacio Quiroga (1878-1937), and seeks to reconstruct the extent to which certain translation strategies and publishing criteria may have contributed to, enhanced, or indeed interfered with his literary reputation and his identity as an outstanding example of short story writing in Latin America.

The exploration of any selection of translated texts, in this case from Spanish into English, may offer valuable guidance for justifying its incorporation into the Anglo-American canon. This is also the case when it comes to compiling an anthology of short stories: why these authors (and not others)?; why these particular stories (and not others)? My own attempt to justify the selection of such representative texts – those through which Latin American literature in particular is read – began in Brazil while attending an international conference on translation over a decade ago. As I was browsing an anthology of Latin American short stories, Lawrence Venuti's words came to mind: "The study of translations is truly a form of historical

scholarship because it forces the scholar to confront the issue of historical difference in the changing reception of a foreign text” (*Scandals* 46).

The book that sparked the quest was Thomas Colchie’s *A Hammock Beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America* published in 1992 by Plume Fiction. After the Introduction, the first section of the collection (entitled “The River Plate”) included a short story by Horacio Quiroga, a household name in the Argentinean literary tradition.¹ The story that first caught my attention was “El hombre muerto” [The Dead Man] in which Quiroga, a craftsman of short fiction during the first half of the twentieth century, succinctly conveys his mastery of the genre. Quiroga spent a significant part of his life in the rainforests of northeastern Argentina, where he nurtured his mind and craft with stories that still resonate with readers today. So much so that, for Quiroga, this particular region serves as both a symbolic and geographical setting for his literary production (Canfield 1362).² This fact may account for his inclusion in the section entitled “The River Plate”, together with Argentinean writers such as Julio Cortázar, Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares and Manuel Puig, as well as Uruguayan authors like Juan Carlos Onetti and Armonía Sommers.

A distinguished writer within the River Plate literary tradition, Quiroga is considered to be “the founder of the modern short story in Latin America” (Lafforgue in Quiroga *Cuentos* I 9, my translation) with more than two hundred published short stories, eleven books, and a number of articles and scripts for both theatre and cinema. His work started circulating in the English-speaking literary world with Arthur Livingstone’s 1922 translation of *Cuentos de la selva* (1918) as *South American Jungle Tales*.

After my initial drive to find a motive for the translation of Quiroga’s stories, a more practical and urgent need emerged. Some lexical details in the translated text of “The Dead Man”, included in Colchie’s anthology, pointed to important differences in – indeed, departures from – the source text. Aware of Venuti’s warning that translation “inevitably domesticates foreign texts” (*Scandals* 67), my search for the English version in this collection began. The English version included in Colchie’s anthology had been taken from *The Decapitated Chicken and Other Stories*, translated by Margaret Sayers Peden; a collection published in 1976 by The University of Texas (Austin).

Sayers Peden’s 1976 collection soon fell out of print and it was not until 2004 that it was made available again, this time published by The University of Wisconsin Press as part of a series dedicated to the Americas. In the meantime, Sayers Peden had consolidated her name as a translator, making available in English the works of other important Spanish and Latin American writers such as Isabel Allende, Arturo Pérez Reverte, Pablo Neruda and Mario Vargas Llosa, to name just a few. With her revised 2004 translation of Quiroga’s stories, I suspected that my research would acquire another layer, a temporal perspective that would allow me to investigate how part of Quiroga’s work had been re-presented to English-speaking audiences, almost thirty years later, as a result of the translator’s (and publisher’s) mediation.

However, upon comparing all three publications (Colchie, 1922 and Sayers Peden, 1976 and 2004), it became evident that, despite these versions offering slightly different information beyond the translated text itself, very little was offered in the paratexts of the anthologies analysed (i.e. prologue, presentation, maps, footnotes, glossaries, etc.). After examining the three versions of “The Dead Man” for differences, printing mistakes, modifications or alterations, I came to the conclusion that the three target texts were identical.

¹ Although Horacio Quiroga was born in Salto, Uruguay, he spent most of his adult life in Argentina, alternating between the northeastern province of Misiones and the capital city, Buenos Aires. Most of his work was written and published in Argentinean newspapers, magazines and publishing houses.

² See, for instance, the short stories included in two of his most accomplished works, *Cuentos de la selva* [Jungle Tales] (1918), and *Los desterrados* [The Exiles] (1926).

A closer analysis of Sayers Peden's 1976 and 2004 translations unveiled a number of further issues relating to the role of translators as cultural mediators; this paper is the result of that work.

The translator as cultural mediator

The role of the translator as cultural mediator – what Steiner has called a “bilingual mediating agent” – has long been acknowledged (cf. Venuti, *Scandals*; Katan; Bassnett; Baker). It is in this capacity that the translator should be able to negotiate understanding between cultures, mediating diachronically and in multiple historical traditions, thus making him/her also accountable for succeeding or failing to do so.

In the translation of literary works, where one finds not only linguistic but also contextual intricacies, the degree of success becomes all the more evident as particular stretches of language can only be fully understood when situation and culture are implicitly or explicitly clear to the interlocutors or hearers; in Simms's words, when translators manage to get “the ‘feel’ for a language”, for “there is no such thing as pure lexical equivalence between languages” (6). Thus, translation reshapes our perception of the world as it allows audiences to reinvent the Other. As Harjo and Bird have argued regarding the inclusion of the Native American literary tradition within mainstream American literature “in English for an English-speaking audience”, the mere act of being translated (i.e. included) or not may determine a work's survival (25).

That is why, if reduced to a linguistic level that merely points out mistakes and/or phrases that could have been more accurately transferred, translation criticism would be narrow in scope. Analyses of translations acquire a more significant dimension when they entail reflection on wider issues, such as the impact a translation may have (had) on a certain readership, or the effects the act of translating a particular writer might have (had) in the reception, acceptance and recognition of an established literary tradition (in this case, Quiroga and the Latin American tradition). Indeed, literary traditions do not just arise; rather, in André Lefevere's words, they are “consciously shaped by a number of people who share the same or at least analogous goals over a number of years” (xi). The process resulting in the acceptance or rejection – that is, the canonization or non-canonization – of a literary text is dominated by discernable factors: the manipulation of power, ideology, and the manner in which institutions, publishing and translation policies combine to place texts in or out of a national canon. As a mode of crosscultural contact between languages and cultures, an act of translation cannot therefore be “understood in isolation from the power relation between the cultures involved” (Schwab 12). This article represents a small contribution to this field.

Setting the context for reception

The 1970s witnessed the “literary boom” of Latin American fiction in the English-speaking world, a process that had begun in the 1960s. Tracing the context for the emergence of Latino literature, de Zavalía acknowledges the “presence, impact and influence of Spanish-American literature and culture in the United States” (187). The influence of that literature in translation in the US at that time accounts not only for the translation boom and the ensuing international dissemination many writers acquired, but also for a discovery and appraisal of Latin American culture, which began to enrich the Anglo-American literary scene both within and outside academia. However, de Zavalía notes that publishers tended to prefer readability, so much so “that an author's style [was] many times sacrificed” for something deemed more “appropriate” in English (194), a practice that had profound implications for both source text writers and target text readers.

It is within this specific context of the boom that Sayers Peden's translations of Quiroga's short stories were published, in 1976. Their publication met with favourable reviews, such as that of George Schade, one of the pioneers in the field of Latin American literary studies, who provided the introduction to the book by briefly outlining Quiroga's life and work. It is interesting that he states: "the round dozen stories which make up this volume can speak for themselves, and many translations appear unescorted by an introduction" (ix). In fact, the translator says nothing about her choices for selecting the stories, nor does she comment on the translation process itself. Sayers Peden's only paratextual contribution in the 1976 edition is a note at the end of the book in which she indicates which Spanish editions she used as source texts (195). Later on in his introduction, Schade offers other words of praise: "Our translator [...] has made an excellent selection of Quiroga's stories that few would quarrel with" (xi). This surely implies that he approves of the corpus, although it would be difficult to argue against the selection since there is no justification or explanation as to why some stories were chosen and not others.

The book's positive reception by scholars is evidenced, for example, by Robert Brody's review in the *Latin American Literary Review*, which begins by affirming that "This is a particularly welcome book of stories [...] Up till now it has been difficult for readers of English to fully appreciate Quiroga's preeminent role in the development of the short narrative in Latin America" (107). The inclusion of Sayers Peden's English short story translations in several other anthologies (for example, in Clifton Fadiman's comprehensive anthology of twentieth-century writers, *The World of the Short Story* (1986), and in Colchie's above-mentioned 1992 anthology) also supports the observation that her English versions had begun circulating in a number of different ways, and that, thanks to her work, Quiroga's writing could become better known and available to a wider English-speaking readership.

After the 1984 paperback reprint – further proof of Sayers Peden's success in the publication world – the anthology was again out of print for a number of years, until a new paperback edition was released in 2004, this time by The University of Wisconsin Press. The back cover and contents page announce the main change in the anthology: a foreword by Jean Franco, a renowned scholar of Latin American literature. Apart from that, the only other change this new edition presents is the position of the Note of the Translator, from the back of the book in the 1976 edition to the end of the introductory section, now expanded to include Franco's introduction. Surprisingly enough, the prologue by Franco is devoted mainly to the literary qualities of Quiroga's work, remaining silent as to the selection, translation or impact of the anthology. Nor does Franco comment on whether Sayers Peden's 1976 translation might benefit from any revision. In short, the new book differs little from its predecessor.

A closer look at the way in which Quiroga has been introduced to the English-speaking readership suggests his work has been domesticated from the outset. Most of the comments introducing English translations of his work tend to assimilate his writing to the Anglo-American literary tradition. This strategy might have been employed in an effort to attract larger audiences, to promote a literature coming from a minor, if rich and complex, Latin American background. Arguably, it might also have been used to justify this work's translation into English in the first place.

In any case, Quiroga has been repeatedly presented with reference to well-known models and paradigms which, in a way, seek to validate his translation into English and at the same time give him the necessary credentials to be positioned within the target literary tradition. Schade, for instance, describes his 1907 "El almohadón de plumas" [The Feather Pillow], as "a magnificent example of his successful handling of the Gothic tale, reminiscent of Poe, *whom he revered as master*" (xi, my emphasis). González Echeverría describes Quiroga's world as one "ruled by tragedy" and sees "The Decapitated Chicken"

“as anticipat[ing] some of William Faulkner’s obsessions and themes [...] perhaps Quiroga’s most representative story” (118). Franco has no shortage of English references, writing that, “Like Rudyard Kipling, Quiroga also recognized the appeal of animal stories and the collection *Cuentos de la selva* [Jungle Tales] was written for children” (xv). However, the examples quoted risk having an unintended impact on the stories’ potential readership. Such justification, Venuti notes, could “provoke the fear that the foreign author is not original, but derivative, fundamentally dependent on pre-existing materials” (*Scandals* 31).

Quiroga’s “El hombre muerto”

Reputedly one of the best short stories included in the collection, “El hombre muerto” [The Dead Man], originally appeared in 1920 in *La Nación* – a prestigious Argentine newspaper regularly featuring some of the most famous Spanish-speaking writers – and was later included in the 1926 collection entitled *Los Desterrados* [The Exiles] (Quiroga *Cuentos* 745).³ The story offers a concise and well-crafted narrative of a man facing the might of nature, revealing his fragile, powerless condition as well as the cruel process of becoming aware of human insignificance within that powerful landscape.

Comparing “El hombre muerto” (687-690) with Sayers Peden’s translation, one notes certain lexical choices made by the translator. For example, I began to wonder why Sayers Peden chose “mare” instead of “male horse”, as in the original (*malacara*), thus misidentifying a valuable element in the narrative (Baker 122). For a man at that time in Argentina, owning a male horse held considerable symbolic importance, as a reinforcement of a man’s virility and a statement of male strength in the countryside, yet this symbolic implication is lost when the protagonist owns a mare.

On another level, was the translator really familiar with the geography of Misiones, where this short story (as well as most of the others included in the anthology) takes place? Central to this story is the context of the Misiones rainforest against which the protagonist is actively battling in order to establish a homestead. For example, the Paraná river, normally a powerful current – as portrayed in other stories such as “En la noche” [In the Middle of the Night] and “A la deriva” [Drifting] – is described by Quiroga here as “dormido como un lago” [asleep like a lake] (my translation). The translator renders the phrase “allá abajo yace en el fondo del valle el Paraná dormido como un lago” as “down below, the Paraná, wide as a lake, lies sleeping in the valley”. Even though both texts mention the important fact that the river is asleep (i.e. quiet) the source text equates this momentary calm with the normal state of a lake (quiet waters) whereas the translation seems to focus more on the size of the river. Some other lexical choices for describing the landscape of Misiones have been diluted in several different ways. For example, *monte*, an uncultivated area covered with trees, shrubs and thickets (a crucial part of the Misiones environment) is rendered as “scrub trees”, “bushland” and “live thicket fence”, while *potrero*, meaning playground, mainly a place where children play football, is rendered as “pasture”, “cleared land” and “clearing”.

Other choices at discourse level refer to the repositioning of key participants. For example, despite its Brutus-like role in the murder of a friend, the machete is “downgraded” in the English version from a main character to a mere tool. The terrible living conditions of a man living in the Misiones *monte* make his machete an indispensable tool of survival, as he is often forced to cut his way through the thick vegetation. The ensuing trail, called a *picada*, may only last a few days, as the dense vegetation will grow back over it again (a phenomenon still

³ All references to Quiroga’s stories will be to *Cuentos completos* (Vols. I & II) edited by Jorge Lafforgue and Pablo Rocca (Buenos Aires: Losada, 2002).

experienced today). Thus, in the original, both machete and man work side by side, with the verb conjugated in the third person plural: “El hombre y su machete *acababan* de limpiar” (Quiroga 2002 687, my emphasis), whereas the English translation is “*With his machete the man* had just finished clearing the fifth lane of the banana grove” (Quiroga 1976 121, my emphasis). This represents a significant “simplification” as the next line explains that both man and his machete were about to finish their day’s work and were very pleased with their efforts.

More specific translation problems emerge later on: the key event, the instant that signals the fate of the man, is narrated by Quiroga (himself a keen photographer) in an almost cinematographic slow-motion sequence, whereas in the translated text the impression is quite different. Compare the following:

Mas al bajar el alambre de púa y pasar el cuerpo, su pie izquierdo resbaló sobre un trozo de corteza desprendida del poste, *a tiempo que el machete se le escapaba de la mano.*

(Quiroga 2002 689, my emphasis)

But as he lowered the barbed wire to cross through, his foot slipped on a strip of bark hanging loose from the fence post, and in the same instant he dropped his machete.

(Quiroga 1976, 121)

In Quiroga’s original the description of the man slipping on to the machete, which is only two lines after we read that man and machete have been working side by side, anticipates the fact that his daily-grind companion will be the one to betray him, in a way, and end his life.

The omission of a line in a paragraph that renders it rather incoherent in English is also significant.

El hombre, muy fatigado y tendido en la gramilla sobre el costado derecho, se resiste siempre a admitir un fenómeno de esa trascendencia, ante el aspecto normal y monótono *de cuanto mira. Sabe bien la hora: las once y media...* El muchacho de todos los días acaba de pasar sobre el puente.

(Quiroga 2002 I 689, my emphasis)

The man, very weary, lying on his right side in the grama grass, still resists admitting a phenomenon of such transcendency *in the face of the normal, and monotonous, aspect of the boy who has just crossed the bridge as he does every day.*

(Quiroga 1976 124; 2004 105, my emphasis)

What is monotonous and normal is not the aspect of the boy who has just crossed the bridge, but the way in which the injured man’s surroundings have not changed; everything looks as it should at that time of day, and he knows this. Everything is the same but he lies still and aware of the fact that, slowly and hopelessly, he is bleeding to death.

A subtle change in punctuation also transforms a rather ontological reflection into an anguished question:

Es éste el consuelo, el placer y la razón de nuestras divagaciones mortuorias. ¡Tan lejos está la muerte, y tan imprevisto lo que debemos vivir aún!

(Quiroga 2002 I 688)

Is this our consolation, the pleasure and reason of our musings on death? Death is so distant, and so unpredictable is that life we still must live.

(Quiroga 1976 124)

Where the Spanish text reaffirms the state of philosophical pondering over one's own death while safe in the knowledge that one is alive (albeit, in this case, barely alive and hopelessly dying) the English translation reveals another state of the soul, one closer to that of a troubled, distressed person, which does not quite match the other traits exhibited in this text about a man in the process of dying.

As we can gather from these examples, the choices made by the translator involve more than linguistic inaccuracy. As Susan Bassnett has noted regarding translations into English:

If the translator then, handles sentences for their specific content alone, the outcome will involve a loss of dimension. In the case of the English translation [...] sentences appear to have been translated at face value, rather than as component units in a complex overall structure. Using Popovič's terminology, the English versions show several types of *negative shift*.

(Bassnett 119)

All of the examples analysed so far pave the way for the assertion that, when appreciating culture-bound beliefs and values that affect the meaning we assign to language and behaviour, cultural misunderstanding is almost inevitable. In a collection of twelve short stories, three take place in an urban setting, but the remaining nine take place in a very specific regional context: the rainforests of northeastern Argentina. The importance of the geographical context, and specifically the subtropical environment associated with the flow of the Paraná River, needs to be taken into consideration when dealing with Quiroga's work, because it is not merely an exotic background against which events take place. Likewise, the human factor – a context of domination signalled by foreign individuals who own the land and exploit the local labourers (together with the region's rich soil) – should be accounted for, as it too represents an “eccentric frontier” in the author's writing, in perpetual contrast with the “civilized” setting of Buenos Aires (Canfield 1368). This is why a lighter-handed domestication strategy would almost certainly have contributed to a better and fuller understanding of Quiroga's work and Argentina's socio-political circumstances at that time.

From other stories in the anthology

It is worth mentioning a few excerpts and reflections from other stories included in the collection translated by Sayers Peden. At the beginning of “A la deriva” [Drifting], as with many other of Quiroga's stories,⁴ the name of the specific animal that triggers the narrative action (a venomous viper by the Tupí-Guaraní name of *yararacusú*, typical of the northern region of Argentina) has not been translated or explained. The use of italics signals the word's foreignness, but not the dangerous nature of the creature it denotes. In a short piece first published as a newspaper article (and subsequently included in the 1967 collection *De la vida de nuestros animales*), Quiroga in fact calls the *yararacusú* “la reina de nuestras víboras” [the queen of Argentinean vipers] (Quiroga 2002 II 185, my translation)

⁴ Apart from the collections mentioned earlier, *Anaconda* (1921) is another example epitomizing the importance of local names in Quiroga's tales.

Likewise, other inaccuracies in the geographical and natural world presented in the English text stand out, as with the recurrence of *monte*, which is misinterpreted as referring to mountains (1976 123). The imprecision here is all the more salient as mountains are a geological feature absent in that northern region of the country. For a writer who is considered to be the most important exponent of *realismo misionero* [Misiones realism], the presence of geographic, linguistic and cultural features of the province of Misiones is, far from a mere background to some of his tales, quite crucial to understanding his work (Garet 16).

In “La insolación” [Sunstroke], set in Chaco, a hot and sparsely populated area in the northeastern region shared by Argentina and Paraguay, a couple of ideological interventions on the part of the translator are worth pointing out. First, the English courtesy title “Míster” (to refer to Mister Jones, the accented vowel showing the process of transliteration and appropriation) – serves the purpose of singling out an English-speaking alien among the countrymen. A possible rendering of this respectful appropriation on the part of the Spanish-speaking peons might have been to include the word with its diacritical mark as an exoticism, in order to reproduce the sense of strangeness. However, the English text fails to evoke this, and in doing so it washes away the expressive and evoked meaning of the original (Baker 15). Paired with this is the decision to retain the Spanish word *patrón* [master], uttered by the equally out-of-place fox terriers, the sole direct voices in the narration. The dogs’ names, predominantly English, are duly italicized in the original, except for one with an indigenous name, seemingly highlighting ownership and imposition. Moreover, fox terriers were traditionally associated with British fox hunting (not a breed that would be chosen by the locals). These characteristics add to the portrayal of the colonizer’s attempt at domination. The word *patrón* in Spanish acknowledges Mr Jones’s position as the head of the household, as the employer; a translation such as “master” would not have been out of place, as it is uttered by the dogs. Then, there is a paragraph that further illustrates this ideological bias in the construction of the master-labourer relationship:

A pesar de su orden, tenía que haber galopado para volver a esa hora. Apenas libre y concluida su misión el pobre caballo, en cuyos ijares era imposible contar los latidos, tembló agachando la cabeza y cayó de costado.

(Quiroga 2002 75)

To get back soon he must have galloped – in spite of his orders. *He reproached the peon, with all the logic typical of his nationality, reproaches to which the peon responded evasively.* Once free, his mission concluded, the poor horse – across whose ribs lay countless lash marks – trembled, lowered his head, and fell on his side.

(Quiroga 2004 15-16, my emphasis)

As can be seen here, an element of reproach has been added, in which “all the logic” is considered to be “typical of his [the *patrón*, Mr. Jones’s] nationality.”

In a manner inconsistent with other stories, in “Una bofetada” [A slap in the face] Sayers Peden decides to italicize the word *caña*, a noun referring to a typical South American alcoholic beverage deriving from molasses. Because it was cheap and locally produced, it was commonly consumed by labourers. Elsewhere Sayers Peden uses the words “rum” (as in the story “Drifting”) and “brandy” (as in “In The Middle of the Night”). The socio-economic implications of finding rum or brandy in the hands of labourers at that time are manifold. They would not have been able to afford either rum or brandy; if they were drinking it, that might even imply they had stolen it from their master.

Conclusion

What started out as mere curiosity to compare translations became an inquisitive search and, eventually, a reflection on how translations are produced. The translation process can, and does, affect the way in which audiences receive and appreciate writers from peripheral contexts such as Argentina or Uruguay. Historical and individual circumstances, to a certain extent, have a bearing on the way a translator is able to carry out his/her task. While one must acknowledge the translator's contribution to literary traditions, the fact that Sayers Peden's translation of Quiroga's short stories has, for some time, been the standard representation of a particular writer/period/style has meant that Quiroga and his work have been portrayed rather unfavourably, failing to do justice to his singular writing style and all its local colour.

The new/old translated texts presented in 2004 represent a visible effort on the part of the publishers to re-introduce Quiroga's anthology to a new, wider English-speaking audience. The fact that the publishers wanted to infuse the reprint with some degree of scholarly authority can be inferred from the addition of Jean Franco's foreword. Venuti's comment that "errors do not diminish a translation's readability, its power to communicate and to give pleasure" (*Scandals* 32) remains true, for the text can be read in English, though it is not a recreation that does full justice to Quiroga's writing. In what seems a lost opportunity, no revision or editing of the main body of translated stories was carried out, explanatory notes were not included, and mistakes and omissions were not amended. Nor was a standardization of the lexicon throughout the anthology made. Therefore, despite the redesigning of its cover, no substantial difference distinguishes the 2004 version from those printed before it (in 1976 and 1984), and the established Anglo-American image of Quiroga remains that produced almost thirty years prior. However, individual readers continue to recreate Quiroga and his work in different ways; creatively, as Jonathan Tittler does, for example in a recently published work on ecocriticism in Spanish American fiction:

Thanks to Quiroga – whose experiences homesteading in the jungle of northern Argentina anticipate those of the modern green movement by some fifty years – we can access these precious glimpses of eco-wisdom.

(Tittler, quoted in Kane 16)

Consequently, while offering new generations the possibility of reading Horacio Quiroga in English, the editorial decisions, policies and choices made thus far have perhaps contributed to a skewed perception of his work. However, that has not prevented Quiroga's literary mastery from speaking to a wider audience.

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